

## **MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LICENSING** **GUIDE**

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### **1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN**

#### **OVERVIEW**

This guide details what a foreign-educated occupational therapist must do to become eligible for licensing as an occupational therapist (OT) in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background and tips on the larger occupational therapy profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

#### **REGULATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN MICHIGAN**

The practice of occupational therapy in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) on behalf of the Michigan Board of Occupational Therapy. You must hold a Michigan license in order to practice as an occupational therapist in Michigan. LARA issues Michigan licenses to first time licensees and to occupational therapists who are eligible to practice in other states (by endorsement).

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT), Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR) exam is the qualifying examination for a Michigan occupational therapist license. However, this is the last step in a longer process of education and experience international occupational therapist must complete to practice in Michigan.

This guide assumes you are an international occupational therapist who is beginning to build your career in the U.S. This guide will include steps that come before the final state licensing process including education and examinations.

## **2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING**

This section explains important steps you must complete before you can be licensed as an occupational therapist in Michigan.

### **STEPS FOR MICHIGAN LICENSURE**

- I. Complete and submit the application for occupational therapist licensure with the appropriate fee(s) and arrange for supporting documents to be sent to the Michigan Board of Occupational Therapy. The State of Michigan occupational therapist licensure fee is \$90.00.
- II. Applicants for occupational therapists licensure in Michigan are required to undergo a Criminal Background Check (CBC) and provide evidence of fingerprint processing from an authorized agency. Fingerprints must be taken using the Customer ID number and instructions provided in the Application Confirmation letter that will be sent when your license application and fee are processed. Do not have your fingerprints taken prior to receiving your Customer ID number.
- III. Graduates of foreign occupational therapy programs must complete the Occupational Therapist Eligibility Determination ([OTED®](#)) process that is administered by The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). The OTED® process includes an evaluation of your foreign OT education to determine if it is comparable to current U.S. entry-level educational standards. Graduating from an OT educational program approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) does not guarantee OTED® approval. Once your education has been approved through the OTED® process, you will be eligible to register for the NBCOT-OTR® examination that is required for all OT licensure applicants in Michigan. OTED® approval is required before taking the NBCOT-OTR® examination. If your education was not taught in English, you will also be required to pass the [TOEFL/TSE or TOEFLibt examination](#).
- IV. All applicants for occupational therapist licensure must take and pass the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy ([NBCOT](#)), Occupational Therapist Registered ([OTR](#)) exam.

### **3. TESTS**

#### NBCOT-OTR

All applicants for occupational therapist licensure must take and pass the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT), Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR) exam.

Applicants for the NBCOT-OTR examination can apply [online](#) or by [paper application](#). An examination application is valid for one year from the date of submission. Payment for the examination is made online by either Visa or MasterCard. The fee for an online application is \$515. The online application must be completed in one session in order to be saved. Applicants using the paper application may also pay by check or money order. The fee for a paper application is \$555. Information about content, administration and registration for the NBCOT-OTR can be found in the [NBCOT Certification Exam Handbook](#).

The purpose of the NBCOT certification exam is to protect the public interest by certifying only those candidates who have the necessary knowledge of occupational therapy to practice. The OTR examination is constructed to measure entry-level competence of candidates who have met eligibility requirements for certification of the OTR credential.

The OTR® examination is constructed based on the results of practice analysis studies. The studies identify the domains, tasks, and knowledge required for occupational therapy practice relative to the OTR credential. The ultimate goal of a practice analysis study is to ensure that there is a representative linkage of examination content to practice. The periodic performance of practice analysis studies assists NBCOT with evaluating the validity of the test specifications that guide content distribution of the credentialing examinations.

There are four different domains for the OTR examination defined below:

1. Domain 01 (17%): Acquire information regarding factors that influence occupational performance throughout the occupational therapy process.
2. Domain 02 (28%): Formulate conclusions regarding client needs and priorities to develop and monitor an intervention plan throughout the occupational therapy process.
3. Domain 03 (45%): Select interventions for managing a client-centered plan throughout the occupational therapy process.
4. Domain 04 (10%): Manage and direct occupational therapy services to promote quality in practice.

Additional details about each domain can be found in the [OTR Validated Domain, Task & Knowledge Statements](#). All items on the NBCOT examinations are classified according to the domain, task, and knowledge statements.

## 5. TIME AND COSTS

Occupational therapist licensure in Michigan depends on many factors including:

- The completeness of your educational and professional records
- Your performance on the NBCOT-OTR examination
- The completeness of your application for Michigan licensure.

Two sample scenarios below show some outcomes that foreign professionals may experience when they seek an occupational therapist license in Michigan. Please do not consider them as minimum or maximum scenarios, only as two reference points out of many. Your experience will vary.

### TWO HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS FOR OT LICENSING

Step	More Efficient Scenario (Approximate Cost & Time)	Less Efficient Scenario (Approximate Cost & Time)
1 OTED Educational Evaluation for NBCOT Exam Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of your foreign degree qualifies you immediately for the NBCOT OTR Examination. Your foreign credentials are well-organized and in English. You complete all program requirements, including degree evaluation and are made eligible for the examination in 1 year.</li> <li>• \$700 &amp; 1 year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems with your documentation takes 2 years to resolve and costs. Increased costs include visitation to your educational institute for evaluation and translating documentation.</li> <li>• \$1,500 &amp; 2 years</li> </ul>
2 NBCOT- OTR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You apply online for the NBCOT-OTR and you pass the exam on your first attempt.</li> <li>• \$515 &amp; 3 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You apply for the NBCOT-OTR using a paper application and fail the exam on your first attempt. You order a study guide and a practice exam for preparation. You reapply for</li> </ul>

Step	More Efficient Scenario (Approximate Cost & Time)	Less Efficient Scenario (Approximate Cost & Time)
		the NBCOT-OTR online and pass the exam on your second attempt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$555 + \$60 + \$75 + \$515 &amp; 1 year</li> </ul>
3 OT License by Exam Application + CBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your application is completed and supporting documentation is in order. You undergo the Criminal Background Check immediately after receiving instructions to do so.</li> <li>\$90 + \$65 &amp; 3 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your application is incomplete and supporting documentation is not in order. You had your NBCOT-OTR scores sent to the wrong licensing jurisdiction and have to pay for an official score transfer. You wait to undergo the Criminal Background Check.</li> <li>\$90 + \$40 + \$65 &amp; 6 months</li> </ul>
•	<b>More Efficient Total</b> <b>\$1,370 &amp; 1½ Years</b>	<b>Less Efficient Total</b> <b>\$2,900 &amp; 3½ Years</b>

## 6. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AIDE

Occupational Therapy Aides are not licensed in Michigan and typically have a high school education and work under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist. They assist patients, prepare materials and assemble equipment, and handle many clerical tasks.

### HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have

benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

## **7. BEYOND LICENSING**

### **MAINTAINING LICENSURE**

Your initial occupational therapist license is only good until the next expiration date of your profession. After your first renewal, your license will be valid for 2 years. You will receive a renewal application 45-60 days prior to the expiration date of your license. Occupational therapist licenses expire on May 31, every 2 years and the renewal fee is \$150.

You cannot renew your license early. Our system is not set up to receive renewal information until the renewal time for your profession. We will mail you renewal information approximately 45-60 days before the expiration date of your current license. It is your responsibility to renew your license on time. Failure to notify us of an address change does not exempt you from renewing your license on time. You can complete an address change and renew online at [www.michigan.gov/elicense](http://www.michigan.gov/elicense). Online renewal payments require you to pay with a credit card.

### **LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)**

The State of Michigan grants licensing to occupational therapists either by examination (the process described in this guide) or by endorsement. An occupational therapist licensed in another state who wants to practice in Michigan must independently meet all Michigan requirements for licensing. If you become licensed in Michigan and want to practice occupational therapy in another state, you will need to research the legal requirements for that state.

## **8. IMPORTANT LINKS**

### **LICENSING & REGULATION**

- State of Michigan [Occupational Therapist Application](#)
- The Michigan Department of [LARA](#)
- Bureau of Professional Licensing ([BPL](#))
- [Licensing Division Website](#)

- [Michigan Board of Occupational Therapy Website](#)
- [Michigan Public Health Code](#) Regulating Occupational Therapy
- [Michigan Administrative Code](#) Regulating Occupational Therapy
- [Application Status](#)
- [License Verification](#)
- [Renewal Website](#)

## Contact Information:

Bureau of Professional Licensing  
PO Box 30670  
Lansing, MI 48909

Telephone: 517-241-0650  
Fax: 517-335-2044  
Email: [bplhelp@michigan.gov](mailto:bplhelp@michigan.gov)

## CREDENTIALING ORGANIZATIONS

- Occupational Therapist Eligibility Determination ([OTED](#))
- Test of English as a Foreign Language ([TOEFL](#))

## TESTING

- National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy ([NBCOT](#))
- NBCOT-Occupational Therapist Registered Examination ([NBCOT-OTR](#))